

Saskatchewan

news magazine

# BRIARPATCH

Volume 27 Number 6

July / August 1998

\$3.00



New Green ALLIANCE  
The GOOD!

the BAD!



...and the UGLY!



## 25 YEARS YOUNG



This August marks the 25th anniversary of *Briarpatch*. We've come a long way since 1973 when we were a ten-page newsletter published by the Saskatchewan Council of Anti-Poverty Organizations. Back then *Briarpatch* was cranked off a Gestetner machine.

Much has happened since then, but *Briarpatch* is still produced by a dedicated group of underdogs who think the status quo is going in the wrong direction and that progressive alternatives can be built through our experiences in challenging the ruling classes that have made such a mess of the world.

Here's to a big collective thank you to the staff, board and volunteers who have worked for 25 years to make *Briarpatch* the best low-budget magazine we are able to produce. But most of all, the biggest thank you must go to our readers for your collective support. It's only through the joint efforts of people like you that one day this small *Briarpatch* spark will join other sparks to help ignite a fire so intense that the ruling class will never be able to put it out. Here's to changing the world!

## A BIASED JUDGE?

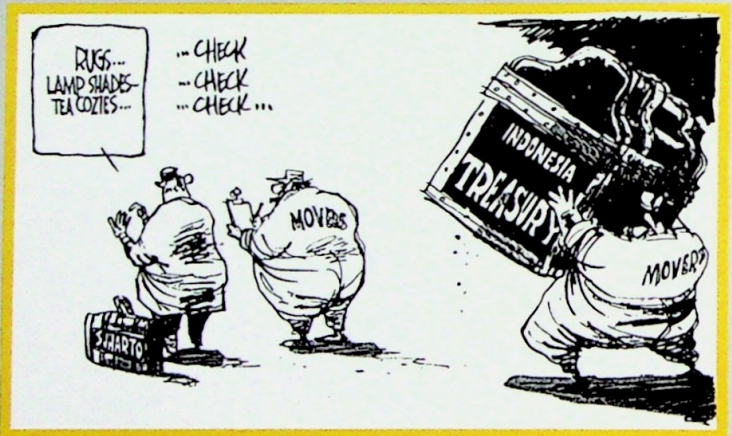


After the Canadian government appointed Justice Guy Richard to arbitrate the postal dispute between Canada Post and CUPW, he was overheard expressing a pro-management bias in a conversation with a businessman on a flight between Ottawa and Toronto. Postal workers were outraged and demanded his removal from the case.

"We have good reason to believe that the arbitrator has already made up his mind on many of the issues in dispute even though he has yet to hear the issues," said CUPW chief negotiator Philippe Arbour.

## IS THIS ETHICAL?

PT Astra Agro Lestari TBHK is a company which operates in Indonesia. The company is supported by Canadian investments from the Ethical Pacific Rim Fund offered through the Canadian Credit Union system.



The Indonesian people have recently ousted Suharto whose family amassed a fortune worth an estimated \$41 billion.

Bambang Subianto, PT Astra Agro Lestari TBHK's President Director, has close links to Suharto's family and currently serves as Director General of Financial Institutions with Indonesia's Ministry of Finance.

If you are concerned that Canadian ethical funds are being invested in Indonesia, please send your concerns to: President John A. Linthwaite, Ethical Funds Inc., 8th Floor, 1441 Creekside Drive, Vancouver BC V6J 4S7 or phone 1-800-267-5019.

## ACTIVIST ART

*Briarpatch* is looking to publish what we call "activist art" - art that depicts people changing the world for the better. The art could include photographs, sculpture, cartoons and illustrations, paintings and sketches, - even poetry or songs. So, if you have any activist art that you think would be appropriate to publish, please send it to 2138 McIntyre Street, Regina, SK S4P 2R7.



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Briarpatch is Saskatchewan's independent alternative newsmagazine committed to building a socialist democratic society. We provide an open forum for disadvantaged peoples and support progressive movements working to change unjust structures and build a genuine political and economic democracy. We support peace, equality, democracy, social justice, Aboriginal self-determination, and the protection of the environment. We oppose the oppression of people on the basis of nation, class, race, gender, ability, and sexual orientation. Briarpatch magazine was founded in 1973 and is published ten times a year by Briarpatch Inc., an independent non-profit organization. Many of the articles and photographs in Briarpatch are contributed by volunteers. Deadline for the receipt of articles is 45 days preceding publication. Unsolicited contributions will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Opinions expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the Briarpatch board of directors or staff. Articles may be reproduced provided proper credits are given. Briarpatch is a member of the Canadian Magazine Publishers Association and the staff are members of RWDSU Local 568. The Briarpatch office is at Huston House, 2138 McIntyre Street, Regina, SK S4P 2R7. Phone (306) 525-2949. One year subscription: \$24.61. Unions & institutions: \$35.31. Publications Mail Registration No. 4171. ISSN 0703-8968. Membership in Briarpatch Inc. is open to groups or individuals upon application and payment of a \$1.00 membership fee. Briarpatch is indexed in the Canadian Periodical Index and Alternative Press Index and available on microform from Micromedia, 20 Victoria Street, Toronto, ON M5C 2N8 and from the Underground Press Collection, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346, U.S.A.



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**COVER PHOTO**

George Manz

**LETTERS****Dear Briarpatch,**

I am writing on behalf of the Edmonton Raging Grannies, rather belatedly to commend you on your March issue, "The Sisterhood of Older Women." It was a very interesting issue, but we were disappointed that there was no reference to the Raging Grannies Movement, which is now flourishing across Canada in most major cities and has "infiltrated" into several U.S. states. We have always been very surprised by the fact that Saskatchewan is one of the exceptions and cannot quite understand why this should be the case. However, we are hoping that the accompanying article by Ralph Nader, describing the work of the Raging Grannies, will help a branch get established in your province.

Ralph Nader gave an excellent speech to a Conference on Public Healthcare organized by the Parkland

Institute (Alberta's answer to the Fraser Institute) in April where he described the horrors of the American private healthcare system and strongly urged Canadians to defend our Medicare system by exhibiting more than "controlled indignation." The Raging Grannies sang to Nader and a large audience on that occasion.

We are finding the gigs to which the Raging Grannies are invited an extremely encouraging way of getting our messages and concerns across to other than the "converted." We are sure that there are older women in your province who could do likewise, and we would be prepared to help them in every way we can if they get in touch with us.

Betty Mardiros  
Raging Grannies  
Edmonton, AB



photo: Garnet Dishaw

About 75 people marched in Regina in May to protest sweatshops and child labour throughout the world. Speakers targeted the sweatshop labour practices of companies like Nike, the GAP, Disney, and Woolworth (owner of Footlocker and Northern Reflections).

Many of the protesters wore T-

shirts which read, "Take a Step Against Child Labour."

The local demonstration was co-sponsored by the Regina East Timor Alert Network, the Regina & District Labour Council, the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress Prairie Region.



# Raging Grannies

*An instrument of social protest.*

by Ralph Nader

**A**t a recent conference opposed to the undermining of Alberta's universal healthcare by a combination of companies and politicians, the stage was cleared for an astounding instrument of social protest - the Edmonton Raging Grannies.

Out came seven "Grannies" who sing serious, sharply satiric songs relating to the environment, social justice and global nuclear arms control. This time they raked over provincial politicians and corporations bent on bringing expensive corporate managed care - the kind Americans endure - to Canada.

The Grannies are the Edmonton branch of the first Raging Grannies group formed in British Columbia in 1986, to protest nuclear submarines at a local base. The Grannies use humour for serious purposes - ones that they often worked on years ago as activists. They like to get their enthusiastic audiences to try "to save the world with a little good-natured rage" using motivating proverbs such as this one from Zimbabwe: "If you can walk you can dance, if you can talk you can sing."

Another venerable fighter for justice through song is Pete Seeger. In a foreword he wrote to the "Raging Grannies Songbook," the great folksinger described these women this way: "As older women, they use the 'Granny' stereotype to gain access to prohibited places: government offices, national leaders, scandalous sites. Then they sing out their no-holds barred messages.... They have great impact, dressed in their outrageous hats and costumes. And often they convey a message that others are unable to. They are unstoppable precisely because they

encourage others to change their lyrics to fit local situations...."

It is a sign of a closing media pattern when jokes, humour and laughter have to be the principal means of conveying concerns over injustices and abuses that affect many innocent people. In the U.S., as serious public discourse over TV and radio dwindles to a trickle, Politically Incorrect, Saturday Night Live and Larry King become occasional sound bite outlets for a serious point or two. As the mass media expands the entertainment and advertising worlds, the serious world begs for some little attention in between.

The Raging Grannies have found a way to break through, without ever losing their dignity. They make good, visual media and their lyrics are clear and understandable. "Oh, we're just a gaggle of Grannies, urging you off your fannies," they sing. And when they focus on harm to children, who could be more credible?

"This is the most effective method of political action I've ever tried," says Betty Mardiros, who is the Grannies' chief doggerelist. The Grannies go where they are not wanted, as well, occupying places from which they are evicted. "These ladies live for eviction," says one reporter, while singing their biting songs sung to familiar old tunes. "The songs are often half over before security guards and others in charge realize what is really happening," the Grannies note.

The Grannies go after those in



power: the Prime Minister for selling nuclear reactors abroad, "rich corporate bums" demanding government handouts, or Premier Ralph Klein. They sing all over the province about the Alberta premier, who has declined to meet with them:

*We live in Alberta, Mr. Klein,  
We don't think that everything is fine,  
We have sent you post-cards and letters galore-  
Don't you get to see your mail any more?*

*If you do, why don't you pay us any heed,  
Could it be that you have never learned to read.*

*If that is the case, we'll suspend belief  
And present our protest now in this Big Brief:*

*Keep Medicare Public - No Private Parts!*

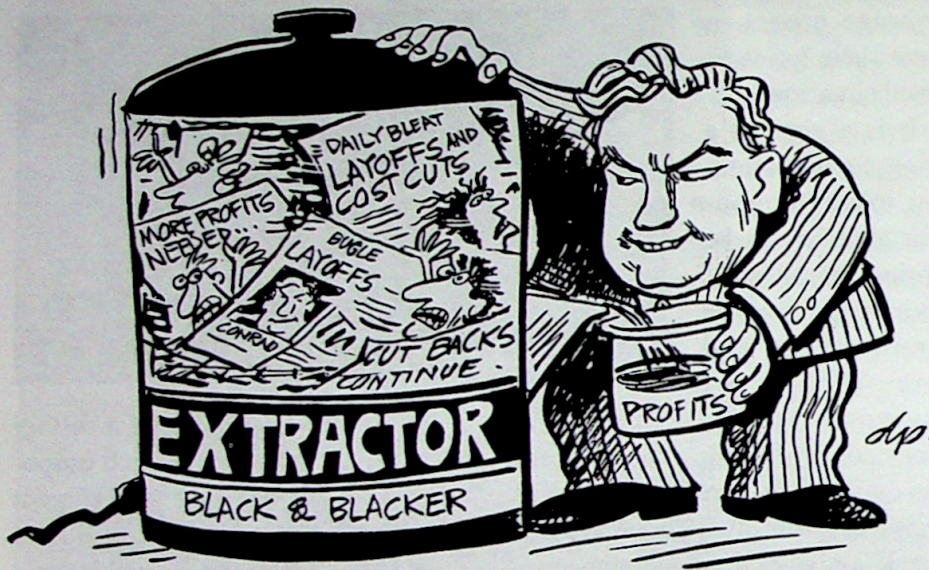
*The Raging Grannies are looking south of the border, having encouraged new chapters in Seattle, Washington and Plainfield, Vermont. They are looking forward to set up more branches in Canada and the U.S. You can write them at 8902-120th Street, Edmonton AB T6G 1X5.*



# Taking on a Giant

*On strike against Conrad Black.*

by Bruce Allen



Times are good for Conrad Black's Southam newspaper chain. Southam made over \$120 million in profits in 1997, a 31 percent increase over 1996. Southam's overall revenue rose 21 percent in the same period and it aims to get a 25 percent return on revenue in 1998.

Aggressive cost cutting has made this possible. This has been especially true with respect to labour costs. Between 1993 and 1996, Southam cut labour costs as a percentage of revenue at its daily newspapers by 26 percent. The Southam-owned *St. Catharines Standard* provides a case in point. Over 25 percent of the paper's newsroom staff have been slashed since Conrad Black bought it almost two years ago.

Yet Southam Inc. is not satisfied. Southam wants to maximize the *Standard*'s profitability at the expense of its work-force forcing the paper's recently unionized newsroom workers to strike to obtain a decent first contract.

Management at the *Standard* is demanding major contract concessions.

Management wants to cut the pay rates for newsroom editors by 12 percent and for photographers and reporters by 14 percent. Management is demanding a divisive, two-tier wage structure and what will amount to a wage freeze for senior employees that will last at least a decade. Management also wants its reporters to take pictures and is demanding that part-timers be excluded from much of the collective agreement.

The newsroom workers belong to the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Local 87-M (Southern Ontario Newspaper Guild). They are determined to beat back these demands for contract concessions and are only seeking eight percent in wage increases over a three-year contract.

## Electronic Scabbing

The *Standard* is ready for a long, bitter dispute. Prior to the start of the strike on May 22, it advertised for freelance journalists to use as scabs in the event of a strike. Significantly, these scabs do not have to cross a picket line.

They can perform the disputed work anywhere and send it to the *Standard* electronically using Email or faxes.

The newsroom workers have also prepared for a major fight. Prior to the strike they held two very successful information pickets. They also began to make plans to launch their own newspaper *The Independent* in the event of a strike and for a campaign to boycott the *Standard*. In addition, they received strong pledges of support from both the St. Catharines & District Labour Council and the CAW well in advance of the strike.

This first contract strike involves a direct confrontation between organized labour and Conrad Black's growing media empire. The stakes for both are potentially huge and labour simply can't afford to lose this fight.

*Bruce Allen is the second vice-president of the St. Catharines & District Labour Council.*

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*What if we choose to reduce the harm?*



# Mr. Romanow Retires

by Morris Grome

*One day in early May as I was strolling down 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Regina, I caught Premier Romanow smiling at me through a shop window. I smiled back, and almost waved, before I realized it wasn't Mr. Romanow at all, but a poster bearing his likeness. The poster said Mr. Romanow was retiring, having delivered on his final promise: to bring Pay Equity legislation to Saskatchewan. I've met Mr. Romanow at many NDP functions, and respect the man, so I marked May 15, 1998, on my calendar as the day of the Romanow Roast. I couldn't miss this last chance to say thanks to Mr. Romanow for his years of service to the people. What follows is my report on the evening's festivities.*

I arrived at the Cathedral Area Community Centre early because for any retirement party in honour of Mr. Romanow, good seats would be hard to find. There were already few seats left: I was forced to take one near the refreshment stand. I recognized a number of faces familiar to me from Party events and, surprisingly, some that were not. But then, Mr. Romanow was a man of the people - of all the people. The walls were tastefully decorated with banners reading "Pay Equity Now" and the like. I had hoped



copies of the Pay Equity Act would be available to read, but they weren't. I concluded the Act was so new that the ink was still wet, so to speak. I told myself to be patient and wait for the next issue of *The Commonwealth* which will surely provide a detailed analysis of the new legislation. Despite this disappointment, I experienced a swelling pride at our government's latest breakthrough in the field of progressive legislation. Take that, Alberta! Once again, Mr. Klein and his honourable dinosaurs eat Saskatchewan dust!

But about the event.

An hour of socializing preceded

the formal program. Refreshments flowed. Wonderful food was served. At nine o'clock sharp, our able Mistress of Ceremonies, Ms. Barbara Byers welcomed us all to this special evening. In warm tones she introduced the first guest, Mr. Romanow himself! Our delight was soon tempered, however, as Ms. Byers continued her introduction. Mr. Romanow could not attend in person due to business commitments. He had, nevertheless, prepared a taped address, which was now played. The crowd sighed almost as one as that unmistakable voice expressed regret at his absence and fondly thanked his friends and the organizing committee. To the tune of a harpsichord playing music from, I believe, the Baroque Period, Mr. Romanow shared with us warm memories of his years in office. The legacy he leaves is truly one of promises made and promises kept. He thanked the Pay Equity Coalition for the support it provided him at the 1997 SFL Convention. It was at that convention, he reminded us, that he promised Pay Equity legislation before he retired. Mr. Romanow's speech contained philosophy, even poetry, and provided rare insight into the heart of public policy making. He spoke of the long road to Pay Equity legislation, of the many roads available, of the deci-



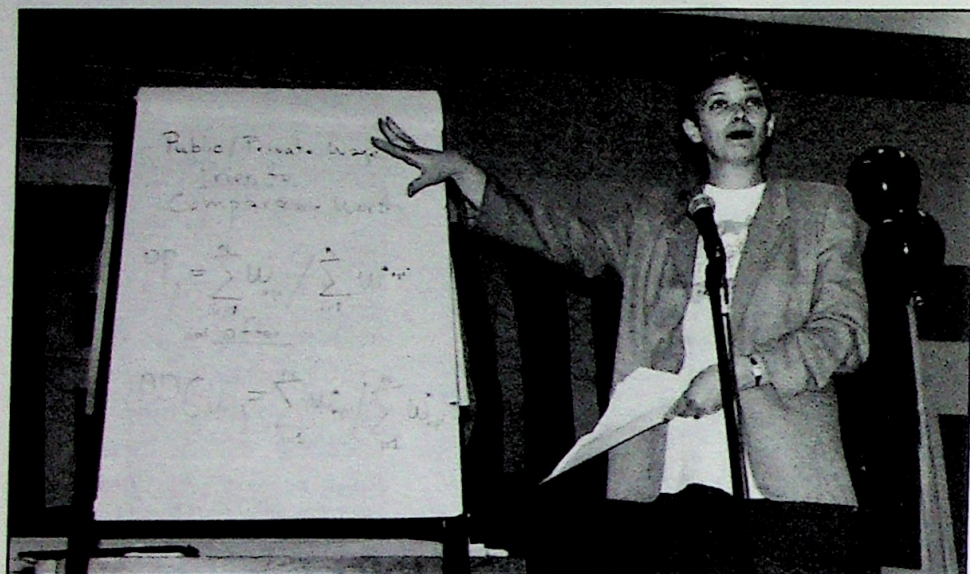
sive road taken. That he made Judy Bradley minister of both roads and women was, it seems, no fluke. It was an essential juxtaposition of portfolios perhaps mystical in the wisdom of its conception.

speaker, Professor Alison Hayford, who provided a very informative seminar on pay equity and comparable worth. Perhaps it was due to the location of my table - near the refreshment stand - but everytime the Professor said

illuminate the concept of "comparable worth." Apparently, with the legislation, we have this too. The formula for "comparable worth" is a complicated, but not unattractive one. I tried to write it on my napkin, which unfortunately was damp and shredded beneath my pen, so I have no written record. (I found this lack of written documentation - first no Act, and now no hand-out for "comparable worth," to be a major shortcoming of this otherwise wonderful event.)

Mr. Romanow wasn't the only one who couldn't attend his roast. A number of telegrams arrived. Do you remember Joanne Zazelenchuk? She was the girl who stole Mr. Romanow's seat 16 years ago. Her telegram expressed best wishes and her deepest regrets at not being present to see Mr. Romanow leave politics a second time. Another intriguing telegram came from Hollywood! Unfortunately, it carried bad news for Mr. Romanow and his fans: there will be no rich movie deal for "Roy Romeo" (apparently Mr. Romanow's screen name). I didn't know until then that Mr. Romanow had screen aspirations but I've no doubt success awaits him at whatever he turns his hand next, he just has to keep trying.

Following a short break, the Mos-



*Professor Alison Hayford explains the provincial government's formula for comparable worth.*

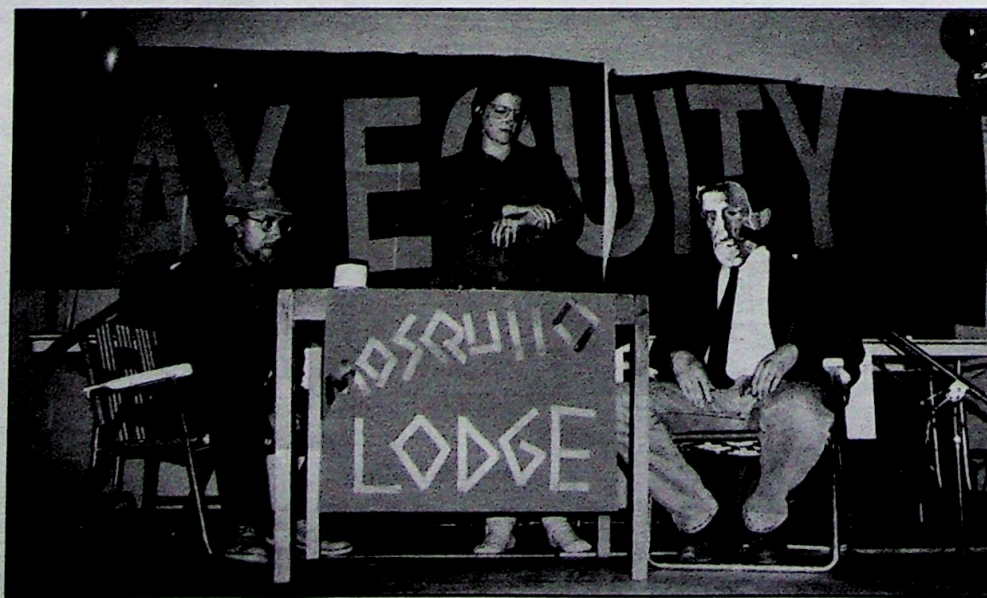
Mr. Romanow concluded his address in a voice thickened with emotion. Was there a dry eye in the room? He received a thunderous standing ovation.

We were all surprised when next a very prim and proper lady rose from the audience to politely take the microphone. She was silver haired and handsome in a matronly way. Though her words angered some at first, all of us, I think, came to realize that the advice she offered, though free, had great value. "Girls, girls, remember your place," she admonished. If you want to be an activist, that's all well and good, but never forget that you're a lady first and that your husband has needs, too - this, to me, was the essential advice offered by this very wise woman.

These words put the audience in a more thoughtful frame of mind, which was fortunate, given that the next presentation was very intellectually demanding indeed.

Our Mistress of Ceremonies, Ms. Barbara Byers, introduced our next

"pay equity," I thought I heard "pain equity." She kept saying we have "pain equity" in the workplace and in society (the road to pay equity may have been a rough one, but now we have it - well before Alberta I might add - it is surely far from painful for the ladies - ka ching, ka ching!). Fortunately, Professor Hayford provided flipcharts to



*Mosquito Lodge host Orange Black and his niece Haroldina playing word games with retiree Roy Romanow.*



quito Lodge Word Game was introduced. The tables were a-buzz: who would be the special guest? A rumour spread that the special guest was to be none other than the Man of the Hour. Could Mr. Romanow escape his business commitments for just ten minutes to play the Word Game? Mr. Orange Black and his niece Miss Haroldina were announced. Natty in their matching lumberjack shirts, they brought the flavour of cottage country into the Cathedral Area. After some preliminaries, Miss Haroldina called for the special guest to come on stage. It was Mr. Romanow! The crowd roared out its welcome. Mr. Romanow shook several hands on his way to the stage. Oh, this was Mr. Romanow indeed - the smile, the hair!

The first word Mr. Romanow had to guess was "Pay Equity." (Not really one word, I thought, but let's see how he does). Haroldina set the timer; her Uncle Orange provided the clues. I've heard better hints, but after only five or six, Mr. Romanow confidently gave the correct answer. More words followed: "Legislation," then, "Now." The words were not really a challenge to Mr. Romanow. I believe he feigned a certain obliqueness in order to frustrate Orange and Miss Haroldina, and to amuse the crowd, both of which he accomplished in spades, and which makes one question the wisdom of the Hollywood producers who sent the aforementioned telegram. At the conclusion of the game, Mr. Romanow was duct taped to his chair. The symbolism was clear: "We can't let this man go." (I believe it was a grave error that he was cut loose because we never saw him again that evening.)

Could it be more appropriate that the last speaker was none other than Mr. Romanow's old and much beloved friend, the professor, author, school board trustee, political activist and long-time party supporter, Mr. John Conway? Mr. Conway regaled the audience with anecdotes from days gone by, days long gone by such as the



*A toast to a politician who always kept his word.*  
photos: George Manz

Swinging Sixties. In those days Mr. Conway was a student living in co-op housing. Mr. Romanow was an articling lawyer. The students in co-op housing conformed - long hair, bell bottoms, banned substances. Mr. Romanow did not - short hair, business suit, career path. The burning question for Mr. Romanow was not World Peace, but Liberal or Conservative?

Would we have Pay Equity legislation today if Mr. Romanow had not opted for the NDP? Who can say. Mr. Conway went on to fondly encapsulate Mr. Romanow's career: boyish MLA, failed leadership bid, Attorney General, the Constitution, Joanne Zazelenchuk, successful leadership bid, opposition to the PCs, Premier, and finally Pay Equity legislation - promised 1991, delivered 1998. And now retirement. Surely Mr. Romanow is the original Promise Keeper!

The formal program was complete. Well-wishers were asked to step forward. Two obliged. Ms. Heather Szeponski, Registered Nurse, thanked Mr. Romanow for the Wellness Model and all it has meant for nurses and women throughout the province. Mr.

Richard Phillips, claiming to be a Liberal, but betraying more than a little respect for Mr. Romanow, shared stories of the Saskatchewan Party. Ms. Barbara Byers announced that refreshments would continue to be served and that mingling was encouraged. Some of us kept an eye on the doors, hoping to see a smiling Mr. Romanow re-appear. But clearly, his business engagement would keep him tied up for the rest of the night.

Balloons were burst as the crowd drifted out, the tables were stacked away, the lights, one by one, turned off. An era had ended, an era begun - the era of Pay Equity. I for one went home to ponder the meaning of it all. Sure, we got Pay Equity today, but what have we lost? Mr. Romanow promised to give us Pay Equity legislation before he retired, but no one thought he'd be so literal. In the language of Professor Hayford, is it of "comparable worth" to get Pay Equity legislation, but lose the man who gave it to us?

*Morris Grome, aka Orange Black, has also been known as Phil Johnson, a member of the Briarpatch Board of Directors.*





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# Community Reinvestment

*A citizen campaign takes on the banks.*

by Murray MacAdam & Duff Conacher



The proposed Bank of Montreal-Royal Bank and TD-CIBC mergers have sparked an intense debate among Canadians about banks. The spectre of a few huge banks becoming even more colossal evokes resignation among those who fear that the mergers are "done deals" waiting to be rubber-stamped by the Chrétien government.

Yet a growing number of Canadians and organizations are actively resisting a megabank future. Fightback strategies vary widely. Some argue we should forget about the banks and focus on building up member-owned financial institutions - an argument which ignores the overwhelming dominant position of the banks in Canada's financial marketplace and that it is our money - the deposits over of 20 million Canadians - which has made the banks so wealthy and powerful.

Others see widespread anger about the banks as a golden opportunity to bring about satisfaction for long-suffering Canadian bank customers,

while advancing a more progressive, community-based economy. This movement for better banks is led by the Canadian Community Reinvestment Coalition (CCRC), made up of over 80 small business, labour, community economic development groups and other organizations across Canada. Groups in Saskatchewan include the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and the Saskatchewan Action Committee on the Status of Women (SAC).

The need to raise women's economic status inspired SAC coordinator Kripa Sekhar to get involved in the CCRC's campaign. "We hear all kinds of stories of women who are unable to get loans, who are not even able to start bank accounts," says Sekhar. "Opening a bank account should be everyone's right."

What we lack are strong laws to ensure that banks and other financial institutions meet our needs, similar to the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) in the U.S.

The CRA goes a long way to mak-

ing U.S. banks and other financial institutions serve everyone, rich and poor alike. It also encourages community economic development through funding and by empowering community organizations.

The U.S. government reviews the performance of banks and other financial institutions in meeting local needs for credit and deposit services in a manner "consistent with the safe and sound operation of the institutions." Bank performance in meeting these needs is revealed by requiring them to disclose detailed data about their loans, investments and services. A bank with a failing grade can be required to take corrective action, and any expansion, merger or takeover of the institution can be denied.

For example, before the Bank of Montreal could expand its subsidiary, Harris Bank of Chicago in 1994, Harris Bank had to correct its poor lending and service record, revealed under the CRA's detailed lending, investment and service disclosure requirements. The bank did so by pledging \$327 million in credit and assistance over five years for small business loans, affordable housing and other needs in Chicago.

These funds result from agreements reached between the bank and community organizations such as the Chicago Association of Neighbourhood Development Organizations (CANDO). The agreements "wouldn't exist without the Community Reinvestment Act," says CANDO executive director Ted Wysocki.

Hundreds of bank-community agreements and \$435 billion for local



investments have resulted since the CRA was enacted in 1977, as banks have been required to correct poor performance in serving local needs - a tremendous boost to the communities involved.

It's worth noting the CRA's potential as an organizing tool. U.S. activists have found that once people have been mobilized to work together around their banking needs, they often feel empowered to take on other issues.

The U.S. banking system is far from perfect. Merger mania has also struck there, and as U.S. banks merge, fears are growing about negative impacts on jobs, service fees and small business loans. But American consumers and community groups can use the CRA to fight proposed bank mergers.

Meanwhile, we lack effective measures for holding banks accountable to community interests, while small businesses have consistently ranked access to capital as a top ten problem in surveys over the past decade.

In fact, a recent analysis of bank lending statistics by the CCRC found that small businesses have been getting a smaller share of total available bank credit, while big businesses get the lion's share.

Of the nearly \$100 billion increase in total business credit from 1995 to 1997, 81.3 percent was loaned out in amounts of more than \$5 million. Meanwhile, the number of customers with more than \$5 million borrowed dropped by almost 14 percent. In essence, a smaller number of big borrowers are getting more of the money loaned out. At the same time, small businesses are receiving only 6.5 percent, at most, of total business credit extended by the banks.

The Canadian Community Reinvestment Coalition is pushing the federal government to ensure that banks meet community needs by requiring them to:

- \* Provide detailed information on loans, investments and services to cus-



*Members and supporters of Citizen's Coalition Against Bank Mergers demonstrate in Regina, May 1998.  
photos: George Manz*

tomers. U.S. laws require disclosure of how many people apply for small business and other loans, how many are rejected, and other details such as closing of bank branches. We need similar accountability and community reinvestment laws.

- \* Provide access to all. With at least 400,000 Canadian adults lacking a bank account, often due to excessive bank ID requirements, we must insist on the right to a bank account, including the option of a low-cost account.

- \* Facilitate the creation of a Financial Consumer Organization (FCO) to help people with advice about financial products and to advocate on behalf of consumers. The FCO could be created if the federal government required banks and other financial institutions to enclose a flyer in their customer mailings, describing the FCO and inviting people to join.

It's clear that a Canadian CRA would result in billions of dollars in new credit for small businesses, leading to thousands of new jobs. No less important are the spinoffs that could be expected in terms of low-income

communities being revitalized and community organizations being able to obtain funding for local initiatives.

There's a window of opportunity to dramatically change a system which has left the Canadian public subjected to an arbitrary, unfair banking system. After reviewing the U.S. system, the Liberals, Conservatives, NDP and Bloc Québécois have all included CRA-like proposals in their party policies or election platforms over the past two years.

With the Liberal government and a federal task force reviewing the proposed bank mergers and other banking issues, the CCRC is campaigning to have its proposals enacted. Your support can strengthen this campaign. To learn more, contact the CCRC at P.O. Box 1040, Station B, Ottawa ON K1P 5R1; phone (613) 789-5753; fax (613) 241-4758; Website: <http://www.cancrc.org>

*Duff Conacher is the coordinator of Democracy Watch and chairperson of the Canadian Community Reinvestment Coalition. Murray MacAdam is the CCRC's outreach coordinator.*



# The New Green Alliance



*A new choice for the Saskatchewan Left.*

by Guy Marsden

Frustrated with the rightward drift of the provincial New Democratic Party, a group of Regina social activists and environmentalists finally decided to take the plunge into electoral politics.

On April 22, Earth Day, a press conference was held to announce the formation of a new left-wing party in Saskatchewan to be called the New Green Alliance.

"Tommy Douglas has left the building," aboriginal community health worker Arlo Yuzicapi-Fayant said at the April 22 press conference. "Saskatchewan no longer has a left voice to speak up for the poor and disenfranchised, and we need that desperately."

Victor Lau, former president of the Regina & District Labour Council, said the New Green Alliance will help put the environment back on the agenda and "restore the perspective of working people to politics."

The new party supports ten basic principles: "Uphold and protect individual and collective human rights; eradicate poverty and equalize wealth; restore and protect the environment; encourage respect for diversity [including] sexual, cultural, racial, spiritual and physical; return and maintain the rights of all working people; decentralize decision-making; promote fair trade and globally responsible economics;

promote publicly and co-operatively owned services and resources; democratize media and information; and establish universally accessible education and health care."

On May 2, a founding meeting was held to expand on these basic principles. About 45 people attended, including anti-poverty activists, environmentalists, students, trade unionists, farmers and activists involved in the fight against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment. The new party adopted 16 policy resolutions dealing with labour, social and environmental issues.

On the environmental front, the New Green Alliance is opposed to clear-cutting and supports an extensive energy conservation program, alternative methods of energy production, and immediate action to reduce greenhouse gases in Saskatchewan.

On labour issues, the new party supports the key demands of the Saskatchewan labour movement - anti-scab legislation, pay equity and most available hours for part-time workers. The founding meeting also passed a resolution supporting a legislated 32-hour work week with no cut in pay.

In terms of social issues, the New Green Alliance supports an increase in the minimum wage to \$7.00 an hour and a 25 percent boost to social assist-

ance rates. The party is firmly committed to publicly-funded post-secondary education and health care, and the expansion of community-controlled health centres. It is also opposed to corporate involvement in Canada's elementary and secondary schools.

The New Green Alliance is strongly opposed to agri-business and favours legislation banning corporate farming. Resolutions were passed supporting family farms, co-op farms, producer co-operatives and producer-controlled marketing boards. Ecologically sustainable and organic agriculture and an alternative food processing and distribution system is also supported.

Another resolution called on the new party to "steadfastly oppose the MAI and work with their allies to stop or undo similar trade and investment agreements, including NAFTA, that put profits of transnational corporations above the interests of people."

The ideology of Saskatchewan's newest political party is radical, rather than reformist.

The New Green Alliance opposes "the current capitalistic system and paradigm which exploits workers [in favour of] alternative economic systems that benefits all humanity." This would include "worker-owned industries and businesses as one possible solution to the present economic di-



lemma."

For the time being, the New Green Alliance has decided not to choose a leader. Instead, members of a steering committee will guide the fledgling party and act as spokespeople when needed.

A constitution is being drafted that will be approved by the steering committee in the interim and approved at a larger annual meeting next spring. In the meantime, the new party has struck six committees to look at election strategy, bylaws and constitution, external communications, fundraising, internal communications and membership development.

The petition drive to attain party status will swing into full gear this summer. Under the Elections Act, a new party has to receive a total of 2,500 signatures from eligible voters on a petition, including at least 100 signatures in at least ten different provincial constituencies.

Although the membership of the New Green Alliance is predominantly Regina-based, connections have been made with interested groups in Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Lloydminster and Nipawin.

The decision to take the electoral route was not an easy one. Informal discussion and debate started around 1993, once the fiscal conservative direction of the Romanow government became clear.

Even though the NDP establishment has effectively thwarted any revolt within party ranks, some labour and social activists still believed it was better to attempt to fight for progressive change within the NDP. Others felt that the left in Saskatchewan should concentrate its energy towards strengthening social movements that would help move the political spectrum to the left.

However, it seems the long list of disappointments by the NDP government on a variety of issues ranging from cuts to health care and education, inaction on poverty and labour legislation, reductions in resource royalties,

gambling expansion, opposition to gun control, and benign support for deregulation and corporate trade and investment agreements became too much to bear. The last straw for environmentalists was the provincial government's opposition to the rather modest reductions in greenhouse gas emissions set out in the Kyoto accord.

The fact that social democratic parties across the world, like Tony Blair's New Labour Party, are adopting similar neo-liberal policies contributed to the decision.

Essentially, the formation of a new party on the left became inevitable.

The reaction of the NDP government to the new party was predictable. Premier Roy Romanow brushed off the potential threat as a "single-issue" party only concerned with the environment.

The NDP may take comfort in the fact that this is the second attempt in as many years to form a new party on the left. In February 1997, a group of Lloydminster-based activists announced the formation of the New Left Forum. Lacking a large enough base, the party was not able to achieve official party status.

So far, the NDP has been able to ignore disaffected voters on the left of the political spectrum. In the 1995 provincial election these voters either had the choice of not voting or voting NDP because the alternatives were worse.

However, if the New Green Alliance attains official party status and fields several candidates in the next election, the NDP will have to at least look over their shoulder. This may force the NDP to return to some social democratic policies, especially if it feels its centre-right coalition of supporters is vulnerable to the two right-wing parties.

In one sense, the political climate has never been more ripe for the launching of a new political party on the left. An April 2 Leader-Star poll revealed a deep level of dissatisfaction with the current political landscape in

Saskatchewan.

Only 25 percent of respondents said they would vote for the NDP. The number of respondents who said they wouldn't vote, seven percent, was almost the same proportion of those who support either the Liberals or Saskatchewan Party which each sat at nine percent support.

More importantly, 40 percent of respondents were undecided.

Thus, while there is growing anger at the provincial government, especially on the issue of health care, Saskatchewan voters are even less impressed with the opposition parties. Given the current political choices, it would not be surprising to see the voter turnout drop even lower than the 64 percent of the electorate who voted in the 1995 election.

Clearly, there is a lot of room for a new left party to capture some of these dissatisfied voters. The challenge for the New Green Alliance will be to quickly expand its membership base among social and labour activists disillusioned with the NDP and expand outside of its Regina base.

The other challenge will be convincing those still active in the NDP or supportive, however reluctantly, to make a clear break with a party that is increasingly indistinguishable from its right-wing counter-parts on a variety of issues, including tax cuts, crime and the environment.

So far, organizers say there has been little hostility shown by New Democratic members towards the new party. The formation of the New Green Alliance will give those left voices remaining in the NDP the ammunition to argue for a return to more social democratic policies. Some NDP members will likely jump to the new party once it becomes more established.

One thing is for sure. Politics in Saskatchewan is going to become a lot more interesting.

*Guy Marsden is a regular contributor to Briarpatch.*



# *The Myth of . . .*

## *The Good Corporate Citizen*

*The Fraser Institute is changing the ideological fabric of Canada.*

by Murray Dobbin

*Murray Dobbin's new book The Myth of the Good Corporate Citizen: Democracy Under the Rule of Big Business is a citizen's guide to globalization and corporate rule. The following excerpts are taken from Chapter 8, "Changing the Ideological Fabric of Canada."*

Does the Bank of Nova Scotia's senior vice-president, Warren Jestin, think employers should be allowed to ask women if they plan to have children and discriminate against them if they do? Does Brian Levitt, president of Imasco, want Canada to model itself on Singapore, where prisoners are beaten so severely they are permanently scarred, citizens can be arrested without warrant, and opposition politicians have been locked up?

Does Sherry Cooper, chief economist for Nesbitt Burns, believe women apply for jobs on the basis of whether they can meet men? Does Royal Bank vice-president Ronald Cathcart think the votes of the rich should count more than those of the poor in an election? Does Richard Currie, who received \$2.4 million in 1996 as president of Loblaws and George Weston Companies, agree with Michael Walker that "poverty is simply a reflection of the fact that the sufferers were dealt an unlucky intellectual or physical allocation from the roulette wheel of genetic inheritance?"

All of these positions are ones that have emerged from the Fraser Institute, Canada's self-described "largest, privately-funded public policy research organization." This organization has prospered and become increasingly influential in stamping a right-wing agenda on Canadian public life due to the backing of Canada's blue chip corporations. Over half of the top one hundred most profitable corporations in Canada have contributed to the Fraser Institute. That is according to a list of corporate donors compiled by the Institute in 1989, a practice it has not repeated.

The Fraser Institute declares it is "an independent

Canadian economic and social research and education organization." The Institute's "diversity of revenue" is supposed to guarantee its independence. However, most (57 percent) of its money comes from business-oriented charitable foundations, such as the John Dobson Foundation whose declared purpose is to "educate the public with respect to the free enterprise system," or the fabulously wealthy right-wing Donner Foundation whose stated purpose is to promote market solutions to public policy issues. (The Donner Foundation alone gave the Fraser Institute \$450,000 to make government debt a dominant public concern.) Corporations contribute 31 percent and individual members only 11 percent. Foreign foundation donations to the Institute appear to be increasing rapidly, leaping from \$223,000 in 1994 to \$342,000 in 1995, so that the Institute is now 17 percent funded by foreign sources. The Fraser Institute has a relatively small membership of 2,000 and is able to raise \$2.7 million from a very small pool of donors.

Because it can count on such significant donations from single donors, the Fraser Institute's fundraising costs are minimal and over 90 percent of its budget is spent on pursuing its anti-government goals. In 1996, the Institute produced eight books, six studies, 12 issues of *Fraser Forum* magazine, 65 "op-ed" articles, 25 luncheons and conferences, and funded six student seminars.

The Fraser Institute is best known for its prescriptions that put the highest value on "freeing" society so that people can pursue wealth. Democratically-determined government policies are presented as gross impositions on freedom, as is conveyed in such Institute titles as "Breaking the Shackles: Deregulating Canadian Industry."

Executive director Michael Walker is quite forthright in explaining what he and the Institute are up to: in the



1990 Annual Report, Walker states: "The Institute is in the ideas business. In a way which is not possible for those in business who are perceived as having a vested interest, the Institute forcefully argues the case for the competitive enterprise system at every opportunity and in every forum."

**I**nevitably, the Fraser Institute's free market advocacy conflicts with notions of democratic majority rule. In 1996 that conflict was made very explicit with the launching of the Economic Freedom of the World project.

The project is essentially a political effort by the Fraser Institute, and other right-wing institutes who are collaborating with it, to redefine freedom in the public debate about the direction of governments. The project originated in a 1984 paper Michael Walker presented to the international club of free marketeers who belong to the Mont Pelerin Society. Rather than majority votes, opposition parties, freedom of association and press, or other such criteria commonly used to define the degree of freedom in a country, the freedom for individuals to do whatever they wanted with their wealth was to be the new standard for evaluating nations. By this standard, one party state Singapore that ad-

ministers public beatings to its prisoners and has locked up citizens for their religious beliefs is rated as far more free than Sweden.

Fraser Institute chairperson R. J. Addington explained the ideological goal underlying the Economic Freedom Index project: "The Institute's ambition in producing the Economic Freedom Index is nothing short of changing the nature of public discourse about the role of government in society. It is our ambition, by creating an international meas-

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urement movement, to ensure that adequate attention is paid to the implications of government actions for the level of economic freedom."

Under the Fraser Institute's "Freedom Index," countries which focus on ensuring these basic needs for all citizens by promoting social equality are given demerits because they infringe on the freedom of investors. The Fraser Institute publication, "Economic Freedom: Toward a Theory of Measurement," argues against "value-laden rating systems which indicate that democracy is the best way to advance economic freedom...."

The Fraser Institute is playing a major role internationally through its promotion of this ideological attack on democracy. In 1996, the Fraser Institute hosted a conference in San Francisco that provided ideological training for participants from 37 countries in the use of the Index. The American foundation, the Liberty Fund, with its annual budget of \$115 million is paying for the costs of Fraser Institute work on the Index.

At a Fraser Institute symposium, "Freedom, Democracy, and Economic Welfare," held in 1986, Milton Friedman went after a speaker who dared to say "democracy is an ultimate value, given protection of minority rights and basic fundamental rights." Friedman said flatly that "You can't say that majority voting is a basic right ... That's a proposition I object to very strenuously." He argued that the ability to freely pursue the acquisition of wealth should be considered the penultimate social value, whereas the pursuit of social justice would "ruin the world." Quoted in the Fraser Institute's monthly magazine *Fraser Forum*, Friedman has said: "One of the things that troubles me very much is that I believe a relatively free economy is a necessary condition for a democratic society. But I also believe there is evidence that a democratic society, once established, destroys a free economy."

How far would the Fraser Institute roll back democracy? Here are the views of Walter Block, who co-authored the report, "Economic Freedom of the World - 1975-1997," worked as the Fraser Institute's senior economist from 1979 to 1991, and whose opinion pieces are still published in *Fraser Forum*. At the 1986 Fraser Institute symposium on democracy, Block said: "Why does it follow that we should

have an equal right to vote in the political process? Voting in a political process is not a negative freedom, it is a positive freedom, and it is an aspect of wealth. We don't say that everyone has an equal right to vote in IBM ... it depends upon how many IBM shares they bought. If we look upon the polity as a voluntary organization, we must recognize the legitimacy for unequal votes."

Consider the sexual harassment which continually occurs between a secretary and a boss ... while objectionable to many women [it] is not a coercive action. It is rather part of a package deal in which the secretary agrees to all aspects of the job when she agrees to accept the job, and especially when she agrees to keep the job. The office is, after all, private property.

*Walter Block,  
Fraser Institute.*

Block disputes the idea that freedom of assembly and freedom to form unions should be considered positive. Block has called unions "bands of criminals." He says "Unions are just institutions that engage in prohibition of entry into labour markets. They are anti-free labour markets, and I'll be damned if I can see why they get a plus. And the same goes for political demonstrations, which are often organized violations of private property rights." In terms of human rights, Block makes comments reminiscent of the Nazi philosophers about how these are a sign of the decline of the strength of a people: "The first settlers in the land meet harsh conditions and this resolve and strong character carries over until the third or the fourth generation. But eventually later generations get weaker. They become involved in pornography and rights for homosexuals and things like that."

Women's rights are also expendable in Block's world view, sacrificed on the altar of private property rights: "Consider the sexual harassment which continually occurs between a secretary and a boss ... while objectionable to many women [it] is not a coercive action. It is rather part of a

package deal in which the secretary agrees to all aspects of the job when she agrees to accept the job, and especially when she agrees to keep the job. The office is, after all, private property."

Michael Walker summarized the Fraser Institute's conference on democracy as finding that "majority rule of itself has no particular virtues...." In 1991, when Walker appeared before the Standing Committee on Finance to lobby for legislated limits on government spending, he argued against the "tyranny of the majority" and said an amendment to the Constitution was needed to place a "limitation of the ability of Parliament to legislate with regard to the extraction of a person's income ... The Fraser Institute, through its National Tax Limitation Committee, has been



investigating ways in which the self-destructive economic forces unleashed by democratic political choice might be restrained."

He made similar arguments in 1993 to Finance Minister Paul Martin, who had invited the Institute to an all-day meeting just one month after the Liberals won the 1993 federal election. Walker insisted in a paper entitled "The Political Problem" that just as employers did not downsize on the basis of the votes of their employees, nor should government base their budgetary decisions on majority opinion.

*Murray Dobbin is a Saskatchewan author, broadcaster and social activist now living in Vancouver. He is a frequent keynote convention speaker on the MAI, corporate rule and the neo-conservative agenda.*

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# Fraser Alert

***Warning: The Fraser Institute and the Donner Foundation are launching a "contest" to undermine non-profit organizations.***

by Murray Dobbin

**T**he Fraser Institute is launching a new initiative aimed at undermining the non-profit sector and attacking the relationship between government and non-profit organizations.

The Fraser Institute, the neo-liberal, corporate-funded "think-tank" based in Vancouver, has hooked up with the Donner Canada Foundation, a well-funded foundation which finances many right-wing causes in Canada, in a project aimed at gathering information to be used in its promotion of free market solutions to social policy issues.

The project, funded by and named for the Donner Foundation, offers six \$5,000 prizes purporting to award "best practices" by non-profit agencies and a \$25,000 award for the agency "which best illustrates the principles of excellence." These cash awards in effect offer to pay non-profits for their co-operation in their own demise.

The Fraser Institute's explicit mandate is to reduce the social role of government to the minimum. Its motto is

"Public problems, private solutions." In its fundraising materials the Fraser Institute boasts about being able to promote the interests of corporations in ways that corporations cannot.

The Fraser Institute constantly attacks public medicare and public education as dismal failures, and attacks official poverty statistics as wild exaggerations of real poverty.

In a leaked five-year plan, the Fraser Institute indicated it intends to double its budget through canvassing 25 large multinational corporations. Under the heading "Social Affairs Unit" the plan indicates a major new focus on social services and welfare. It states: "A key aspect ... will be to explore the possibilities of systematically replacing government programs in these areas with private alternatives." It also states that it would undertake efforts to undermine the Vanier Institute whose studies have influenced past governments' social policy. One objective of the plan



multinational corporations and wealthy people. Briarpatch isn't.  
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Regina, SK

is to get Statistics Canada to adopt the Fraser Institute's definition of poverty.

The Donner Foundation funds the Fraser Institute's relentless attack on the government debt in which it promotes massive cuts to social spending as the only solution. It financed the establishment of an East Coast clone of the Fraser Institute (the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies); the neo-liberal *Next City* magazine; and various charter school advocacy groups (promoting privately-run, publicly-funded schools). The Foundation gave the University of Victoria \$450,000 to establish a Centre for Municipal Studies to examine lowering tax revenues and "market options in delivering public services." It has also funded a group of Canadian professors defending University of Western Ontario professor Philippe Rushton, whose writings claim blacks are less intelligent and have smaller brains than whites.

The "contest" application, sent out by the Fraser Institute, names some of the judges for the contest. They include Donner chairperson Allan Gotlieb, one of the most vigorous proponents of free trade, Sally Pipes, executive



**William Henry Donner**  
*Founder of The Donner Canadian Foundation.*

director of the conservative Pacific Research Centre, and Patrick Luciani, Donner's executive director.

While the cover letter written by the Fraser Institute describing the contest says the study will only use "aggregate statistics" from each agency, nothing on the Donner application form makes any promise about how the data for individual agencies will be used.

The questions which must be answered to "win" the contest are loaded with neo-liberal traps which can be used to attack the social agencies which co-operate. Several questions seek information on performance indicators which could be used to prove that private sector providers are "more efficient" and should therefore replace government and non-profit providers.

Please do not co-operate with this project. If you have any relationship or influence with non-profit agencies, immediately alert them to the dangers of co-operating with this project.

*Murray Dobbin is the author of The Myth of the Good Corporate Citizen.*



# Changing of the Guard

*Students were in the forefront to oust the Indonesian dictatorship.*

by Colin Hall

On May 19 the University of Regina Students' Union held a public memorial service for students missing and murdered at the hands of the Indonesian security forces. Speakers discussed the situation in Indonesia and the bloody history of the recently toppled Suharto regime. People attending the memorial wrote messages of solidarity that were sent to the Indonesian Human Rights and Legal Aid Commission.

"The students and workers will succeed in their struggle," wrote Ken Grainger, a University of Regina student. "We are here today as members of a global community of resistance." Grainger's prediction came true two days later when Suharto finally resigned.

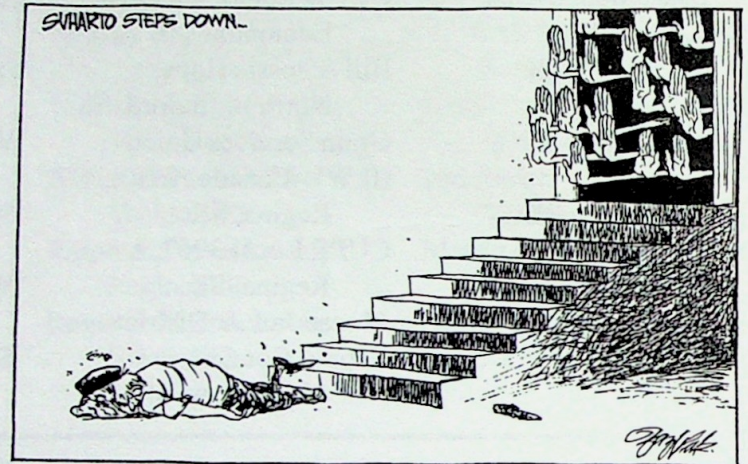
Suharto was forced to resign by a growing surge of dissent and insurrection. The popular revolt against Suharto began to pick up speed in March when the aging dictator was appointed for yet another term as president.

University campus protests throughout Indonesia grew in popularity from March to early May. Campuses in Jakarta were at the epicentre of the popular resistance. After a bloody confrontation with police on May 12, the protests could no longer be confined to campuses. Police in Jakarta opened fire on protesters who had occupied a stretch of highway. The police, who fired from an overpass above the demonstration, killed six students and injured more than 20.

This display of brutality rocked the nation. Thousands gathered to mourn the loss of the student activists and condemn the government. The police violence set off hostilities in the Indonesian people that had been accumulating for more than 30 years. An estimated 500 people were killed in the riots, many trapped inside burning malls and businesses. The rioting left parts of Jakarta a smouldering rubble.

After the riots, the protests regained their sense of direction and purpose. Students protested outside parliament, eventually moving in and occupying the building for several days. The students were dissatisfied with Suharto's appointment of his vice-president, Jusuf Habibie, to replace him.

One of Habibie's first acts as president was the release of two political prisoners. One of the prisoners,



Muchtar Pakpahan, was serving a four-year sentence for his involvement in organizing independent trade unions. While this show of good faith by the new government is encouraging, Habibie has earned a reputation as Suharto's "yes-man."

The new president has long been considered a political lightweight in Indonesia. So far Habibie has accomplished very little. In a weak attempt to make Indonesia a major military power in the region, Habibie arranged to purchase several German World War II battleships. Many of the ships barely survived the trip to Indonesia. The purchase cost millions of dollars, while ship repairs will cost millions more, an expense the government can ill afford.

The situation in Indonesia is not yet stabilized. Suharto has not disappeared from the scene. Since coming to power, Suharto has ruled Indonesia in strict compliance with the global capitalist agenda. The power elite, who grew enormously wealthy under Suharto, is still in power.

The people's struggle in Indonesia is far from over. We have witnessed the violence which the collective fury of the people can bring. However, we have also witnessed the potential for change, and the joyous moment of victory.

*Colin Hall is an organizer and student at the University of Regina. As a member of the new, non-hierarchical collective executive, he will be helping to bring the global community of resistance to Regina. He encourages all people to join the struggle.*



# Down Under



*Dogs and guards take over the Port Botany Wharves.*  
photo: Fairfax Photo Library

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*The paramilitary attack on Australian dockworkers is a litmus test. If the back of the strongest union in Australia is broken, then all the others are easy targets.*

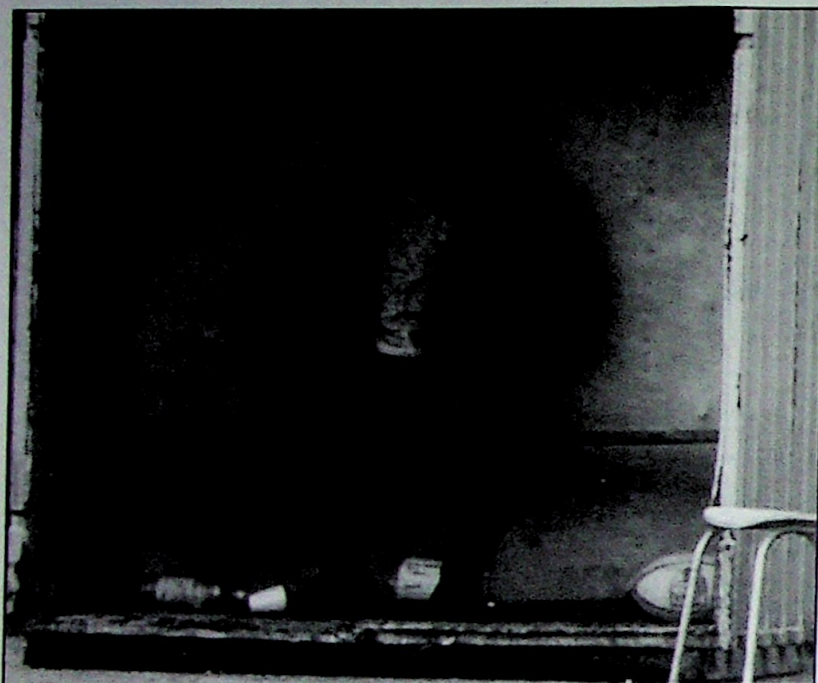
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by Ingrid Alesich

**A**ustralia is a very large island, floating in a down under corner of the planet, somewhat isolated, and very dependent on its major ports for trade. Here in Canada, if ports are closed, there are options of roads to the U.S. This circumstance of geography is key to the current power struggle between global shipping corporations and the front line workers at docksites.



**T**he Australian Liberal/Country party coalition government is much like what we would have in Canada if we melded the Conservative and Reform parties. The Australian government has recently been implicated in



*Masked goon awaits orders from Patrick Stevedores.*

a conspiracy to train ex-soldiers as dockworkers in a secret strategy to break the back of the most militant union in the country, the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA). Leaked documents from military personnel reveal that a phoney company, Fynwest, had been created by Patrick Stevedoring Co., members of the Australian federal government, and the agribusiness-based National Farmer's Federation. An advertisement was placed in a military newspaper late last year seeking applicants from the ex-soldier pool for jobs in Australia's major ports. These recruits were then secretly flown to the port of Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates for training.

Why ex-soldiers and why all the secrecy? Larger questions also come to mind: Why would a supposedly democratic government utilize these tactics?

The plans for a showdown with dockworkers have been in the works for over a year. A leaked memo shows that Peter Reith, Australia's Minister of Workplace Relations, was meeting with both Patrick and P & O Stevedoring on March 10, 1997. The meeting focused on firing the entire unionized waterfront work-force.

On April 7, 1998, 2,000 MUA members were fired for being union members, and were immediately replaced by the paramilitary scabs. Masked goons and guards, accompanied by attack dogs, confronted MUA members on the docks. The unionized workers were told to leave immediately, that their jobs were gone.

Laurie Brown, a worker at Darling Harbour in Syd-

ney said: "There were guards and dogs everywhere. It was like a military operation." Another worker said he was pulled off the job and surrounded by about 50 guards and barking rottweilers. In Melbourne, the port with the most militant work-force, workers experienced the same treatment.

In Brisbane, 184 fired workers and their supporters were arrested on picket lines on April 21. But MUA members fought back, successfully shutting down the port of Brisbane three days later.

But the dockworkers were not alone in their fight. Many citizens, especially in the state of Victoria, were outraged by the firings. They began to join the MUA picketers on the docks, aware that they could be next.

A state judge in Victoria announced a court injunction against any members of the public being anywhere near the docks. The community and the union were outraged and appealed the judge's decision. That decision was overturned by the state Supreme Court with a statement saying that it was undemocratic to "bar the whole world from the docks."

Support for the dockworkers by the general public continued to increase. On May 6, 100,000 people marched in the streets of Melbourne to oppose the actions of both the conservative federal and state governments.

The trickery of the Australian government and Patrick Stevedoring Company continue as we go to print. Two years ago, conservative Prime Minister John Howard promised companies, that if elected, he would break the back of the MUA. He also said he would create a climate of a "Relaxed and Comfortable Australia."

#### **International support on the waterfront**

Hundreds of demonstrating Japanese unionists met the *Australian Endeavour* in Osaka to protest the use of non-union stevedores to work the ship in Australia. More demonstrations were held in Yokohama and Nagoya.

There's a big red ship that appears to be anchored permanently off-shore from Los Angeles and it's not the Queen Mary. It's the *Columbus Canada*, a German-owned ship. It was boycotted because its cargo of Australian lamb and beef had been loaded by non-union labour. The owner is now suing the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) for losses. The ILWU controls every commercial harbour on the west coast of the U.S. and Canada.

In Bombay, India, dockworkers who are members of the International Transport Workers' Federation warned the *CGM Gauguin* not to bother docking. Meanwhile, Indian train conductors are contributing 20 cents per day to the MUA; that's a lot of money to these low-paid workers.



Other countries where workers have declared support for the MUA's struggle include Sweden, South Africa, Finland, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, Canada and Britain. This war over unionization of dockworkers has global significance as corporate conglomerates and the MAI fight to free up a large pool of cheap labour.

The paramilitary attack on the dockworkers is a litmus test. If the back of the strongest union in Australia is broken, then all the other unions will be easy targets.

This is not the first attack on dockworkers in the world. In January 1998, British dockworkers in Liverpool were forced to end their long running dispute. New Zealand suffered the destruction of its wharf unions in the early 1990s. At Veracruz, Mexico the union was eliminated at gunpoint. Dockers in other Mexican ports fell into line.

### The tide turns

After weeks of militant picket lines, the federal court ordered Patrick to rehire its employees. Suddenly, Patrick declared that it was bankrupt and unable to pay its employees, having hidden part of its capital with Citibank in the U.S.

Documents show that Patrick had offered wages of between \$30,000 to \$60,000 in the individual contracts with the paramilitary forces before the attacks began. Most of the former soldiers are now unemployed, having discovered that their individual contracts are not worth the paper they are written on. Ironically, they are now leaking the details of the conspiracy to the Australian media.

The MUA dockworkers are now working for nothing until there is a settlement with what is known as the Creditor's Committee. Their status has changed from being fired and locked out, to employees occupying the premises. The workers have a telephone tree with thousands of supporters they can call upon should the need arise.

With the assistance of other unions and local citizens, they have successfully stopped the movement of goods at the biggest Patrick docks.

The Victoria state police, in the midst of a bargaining dispute with their conservative government, refuse to implement various court injunctions.

A locomotive engineer, bringing goods to the Melbourne dock, stopped short of the terminal, stated he felt ill, and left the train, thereby successfully blocking the entrance. In Brisbane, 20 workers chained themselves to railroad tracks to stop cargo destined for overseas.

Peter Ewer, a labour researcher from Melbourne, was on a cross-Canada tour in May to educate Canadians about

the MUA struggle. He recalled the system of hiring in the late 1890s, called the Bull System. Men had to parade before potential employers, much like the slave market. The ship owners would choose them according to age, size and



*Police move in on Port Botany's human blockade.*  
photo: Allen Barron

bulk. At that time, with no cranes and automated container docks, workers had to lift 200 pound bales of wheat or wool.

There is a global urgency for working people to unite and turn the tide. The battle on the docks is key. Docks all over the world are choke points for international trade. The dockworkers are not fighting trade, they are battling for working people everywhere to maintain their democratic rights and integrity in the workplace. The Australian government claims that the power of the MUA stands in the way of Australia's productivity and global competitiveness. Does this sound familiar?

Country after country, under the pressures of global competition, "free" trade, and the corporate agenda of the OECD and the MAI, are privatizing, mechanizing and throwing thousands of workers from unionized jobs. The push is for us all to be individual contract workers, perhaps not parading as blatantly as the "bulls," but pushed towards utilizing the illusive channels of Email and cyberspace, alienated and isolated from each other.

It's time to fight back.

*Ingrid Alesich is a freelance writer and former resident of Australia. If you wish to keep up with MUA events through cyberspace, an Email address is:*

*Takver@onaustralia.com.au*



# Javier Giraldo

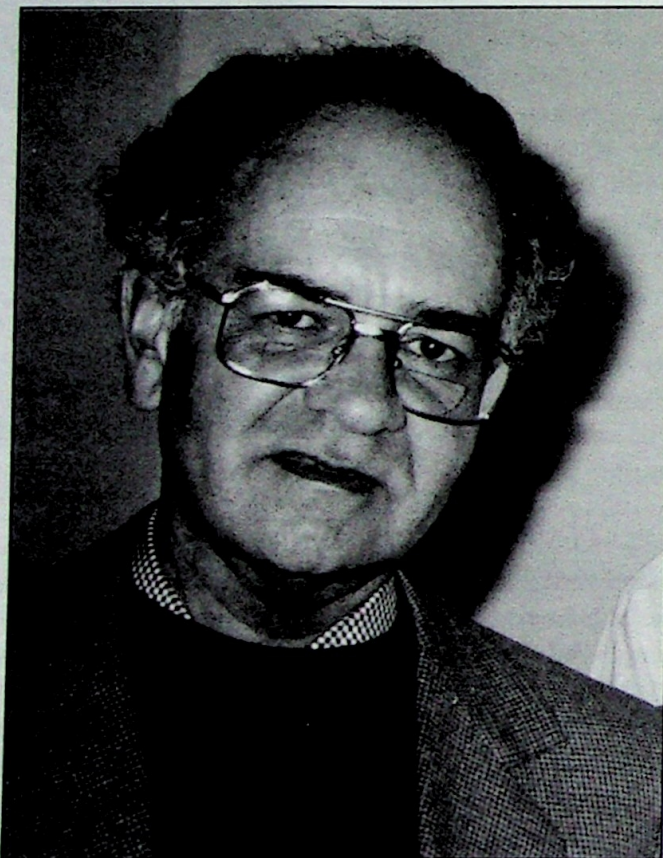


photo:  
Robert Vander Vennen

## The Colombian Resistance

by Evangelina Sapp

*Rev. Javier Giraldo is a Jesuit priest and founder of the Intercongregational Peace and Justice Commission, a network of 55 Roman Catholic congregations in Colombia. He is also the author of Colombia: The Genocidal Democracy. Father Giraldo visited Canada in December 1997 to receive the John Humphrey Freedom Award, given to him and the Commission for human rights activism.*

*Colombia has the highest rate of political violence in the Americas. About 9,000 people were murdered in 1993 because they were considered "undesirable" to the state. In the civil war currently raging, left-wing guerrillas control half the country. On May 13, 1998, Colombian Special Forces surrounded the offices of the Peace and Justice Commission and searched the premises.*



**Briarpatch:** What kind of force do the guerrillas represent in Colombia? In what circumstances did they arise?

**Javier Giraldo:** I believe they developed within a total social dynamic. The guerrillas began operating in the 1960s. During that time there were guerrillas in many Latin American countries and they represented hope for profound change, for defeating the political and economic powers. These guerrillas developed under very violent circumstances. In the last ten years, that violence has been increasing. In 1986, the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) had 30 battle fronts; today they have over 70. The ELN (Army of National Liberation) had three battle fronts, while today they have five or six.

There is a very close relation between the injustice a large part of the Colombian population is subjected to and the development of the guerrillas. I have been in many areas of conflict where the people are completely marginalized and live in terrible misery. I have seen the barbarities committed by the military and how the people try to defend themselves.

A few days ago, the Bogotá newspaper *El Tiempo* published an article that stated that peace in Colombia was impossible because when the reporter, who was a former mayor of Bogotá and worked for the IMF and World Bank, travelled in Colombia, he saw the frightening misery people live in. He said that this misery is the real cause of the violence.

The proof is also seen in analyzing who is most likely to join the guerrillas. They are young people who have only seen poverty and injustice in their lives. I truly believe that there is a very close relation between injustice, poverty and the guerrillas. This does not mean that I support the guerrillas nor that they do not commit errors. We criticize and denounce many acts that they commit. To deny, however, the connection between injustice and the guerrillas is to close your eyes to reality.

**Briarpatch:** We know that most of the human rights violations are committed by paramilitary groups. Why were they created? Why has the government of President Ernesto Samper legalized them as cooperatives?

**Javier Giraldo:** One factor in these human rights violations has been a strategy by the state to confront insurgency. Since the 1970s, all the Latin American armed forces meet at the Conference of American Armed Forces. The national security doctrine was developed in these conferences. This doctrine was the foundation of many of the military dictatorships in Latin America and this also had its effect on Colombia. It inspired a response by the state

against the guerrillas. This response has two facets; the first is to expand the war into a war of ideologies and the



persecution of social organizations. The average number of political deaths has been 3,000 every year since the 1980s, and these are only the most obvious political murders. The great majority of those murdered are not combatants in the war. The war is not against the guerrillas but everyone who opposes official state policies. This ideologi-

cal persecution has been one of the counterinsurgency strategies.

The other fatal facet of the war has been to include the civilian population in the fighting. This is done by organizing them into groups with clandestine links to the military. This is called paramilitarism. It began at the same time the first observation missions from the international community were arriving in the 1980s. The government and military were bothered by the visits from Amnesty International, the OAS teams and the increasing vigilance that put a spotlight on their participation in disappearances and assassinations. That's why they began to create this clandestine military arm of the death squads, called paramilitaries. These civilian "defense" groups have now been legalized as cooperatives. This follows the same strategy - trying to implicate the civilian population in the armed conflict by giving them arms and coordinating their actions.

These paramilitaries have committed many atrocities. In the department of La Meta, all members of the political opposition party, Unión Patriótica, have been assassinated, including parliamentarians, congresspeople, community leaders, unionists and human rights workers.

We went to many communities where we witnessed how the military organized paramilitary groups, how the regional commander of the Armed Forces went from house to house along with the paramilitary leader, collecting taxes to fund the paramilitary. In Urabá we went to a community that is close to a paramilitary station. This station is on a main highway and only three minutes away from the military base in that region. Thirty people have been killed in this community and there is complete complicity between the state, the attorney general, the police, the military, and the paramilitary. Everyone collaborates with their action and silence.



At the moment, paramilitarism has spread to the whole country. The mass media contributes by legitimizing these groups. The large newspapers like *El Tiempo* and *El Colombiano* publish page-long articles for several days about paramilitary leaders.

Drug traffickers are also linked to the violence. Drug trafficking was at first a clandestine operation, but traffickers have used the purchase of large tracts of agricultural lands to launder drug money and legitimize themselves. This produced a large concentration of the most productive agricultural lands in the hands of drug traffickers. These lands were undoubtedly in areas of conflict. The drug traffickers began to have their own private armed forces. In 1985, an alliance was created between the drug traffickers and the paramilitary. This alliance meant that the paramilitary had large amounts of money at their disposal to buy more sophisticated arms, communications equipment and military vehicles. This was a very important factor in the increase in violence in Colombia.

**Briarpatch:** How has the drug industry affected Colombia? How can it be eliminated?

**Javier Giraldo:** When foreigners talk of Colombia, they say that all the problems are drug-related. Many of the people involved in drug processing act out of necessity. They make just enough to subsist and suffer all kinds of oppressive measures from the state, as demanded by the United States. They can be considered victims in many ways. The

economic pressures are so great that a school teacher, for example, cannot survive on his or her salary and must move outside the coca growing area because the price of everything goes up in coca growing regions and it becomes increasingly more difficult to survive there. We have to include all these factors when we discuss the drug problem.

The drug cartels represent powerful groups that have penetrated all institutions including the parliament and the police. They have had a tremendous corrupting effect and have at the same time contributed to the increasing violence.

Also, we cannot analyze the drug problem as a Colombian problem because it is an international problem. A Colombian reporter estimated that the U.S. receives \$120 billion annually from drug sales; in comparison, only \$3-to-\$4 billion stays in Colombia. This is one reason why Washington does not want to confront the real drug problem and find a solution. Their interests are very large. As long as the drug industry continues to be clandestine, which produces these exorbitant prices, there will be no solution.

**Briarpatch:** What is the role of the United States in Colombia?

**Javier Giraldo:** Many people know that the U.S. supported several military dictatorships in Latin America for many years. The national security doctrine was strongly promoted by the U.S. in the Conferences of American Armed Forces. Many North American military officers were theorists of this doctrine.

Colombia has sent the greatest number of soldiers to be trained at the U.S. Army's School of the Americas. In 1994 there was a scandal in the U.S. because of the discovery of seven manuals used in the School of the Americas. I have read these textbooks and they are terrifying. These manuals were written in Spanish and never translated into English. This makes it evident that they were intended to instruct Latin American personnel. In these texts are all the practices of repression and torture used in Latin America. This demonstrates the connection between the U.S. and all the forms of repression used in Colombia.

In the last few years there has been a change in Washington's language. A person in charge of looking at human rights issues has been appointed at the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá. The U.S. publishes a report every year that has been very critical of the Colombian government's human rights record. One cannot know how far this language can go after years of approving, covering-up and endorsing many forms of repression. This change is significant even if it is symbolic.

**Briarpatch:** The Canadian government has been actively promoting investment in Colombia. In 1994, Canada sold helicopters to the Colombian military. How does this affect



**The struggle for  
free collective  
bargaining  
continues!**

**Regina Local**





human rights in Colombia? What should Canadian policy towards Colombia be?

**Javier Giraldo:** What should be prevented is the commerce that directly contributes to the war. The best collaboration is that which stops the selling of arms and military equipment used in the war. Germany, for example, has taken the initiative to not sell any arms to Colombia. This has hurt the Colombian military. Germany also barred four Colombian generals who were publicly accused of violating human rights from German territory.

We discussed the sale of Canadian helicopters in a meeting in Ottawa. The Canadian government has opted not to sell arms to Colombia, but they maintain that the helicopters were sold as civilian aircraft. The Canadian government must re-classify what is classified as civilian or military because there have been reports made by a Canadian unionist who went to Colombia, that the same model of helicopters were painted in camouflage and used in military operations, including bombings. There is also a document released by the Canadian government that mentions the sale of helicopters and their plans to sell more. They are promoting these sales and it is very disturbing. We must work together to stop this kind of commerce.

**Briarpatch:** What does your group do in Colombia? What are your objectives?

**Javier Giraldo:** It is evident that what produces much injustice is not only a Colombian problem but an international one. It is a crisis of alternative models of society. Years ago there were alternative models that strived to be more just; there did not have to be so much inequality nor so many people dying of hunger and living in sub-human conditions. The tragedy today is that this future is no longer seen as possible. It seems as though the whole world accepts that it is impossible to have a just model, that we must have a model that is unjust and produces inequality where a large percentage of the population has to live in poverty. It is as if we have been adapting to this and we accept this more every day as something normal. This is the logic of neo-liberal mentality.

The little we have at Justice and Peace must be used to plant the seeds of something different and counter the aberrant logic we are hearing today. We are involved with the displaced in Urabá. Our most fundamental principle in



this project is "no assistance without resistance." We do not want to distribute food or supplies and resolve the government's problems so that it can continue to displace people from their lands. We have asked the people with whom we work to create small forces of resistance. The people from Urabá are organizing themselves in order not to submit to government policy and lose their land. The government wanted to expel them from their land. We are engaged in a permanent struggle for the safe return of the people and are continuing to denounce the barbarities committed against them. These are modes of resistance that try to stop or at least slow-down the criminal logic that is destroying so many people.

At the same time there is the creation of something new. A woman told me once that if they had had all this organization and community-building experience before, they would not have let themselves be displaced. In other words, create new forms of resistance, of community, communication and forms of consciousness in order to sow the seeds of the future.

*Evangelina Sapp recently completed a BA in Latin American studies at the University of Toronto. She travelled extensively in Colombia during 1996.*



# INTERROGATION

## **InTERRORgation:**

**The CIA's Secret Manual on**

**Coercive Questioning**

**edited by Jon Elliston & Charles Overbeck**

**Parascope, 1430 Willamette #329,  
Eugene, OR 97401 (541) 686-5771,  
Email: EASTERISLE@aol.com  
1997, US\$5.95.**

**reviewed by Asad Ismi**

In response to the threat of a lawsuit by *The Baltimore Sun*, the CIA declassified its 1963 "KUBARK Counterintelligence Interrogation" manual and the Human Resource Exploitation Training Manual of 1983.

Both manuals present a chilling array of torture methods used against "suspected subversives" in Central America during the 1980s. The manuals refute the Agency's contention that no such methods were used.

*InTERRORgation* is a verbatim reproduction of the CIA's KUBARK manual, complete with solid bars indicating the passages deleted by the CIA prior to the release of the document.

The torture techniques described range from "non-coercive interrogation of resistant sources" to those literally too horrendous to mention as this passage shows: "Prior headquarters approval ... must be obtained for the interrogation of any source against his will and under any of the following circumstances: 1. If bodily harm is to be inflicted. 2. If medical, chemical or electrical methods or materials are to be used to induce acquiescence. 3. [deleted]."

U.S. National Public Radio commentator Daniel Schorr remarked about this deletion: "Can you imagine what kind of horror that was, to have the CIA excise it even now?"

The coercive methods that the manuals detail include arrest, detention,

deprivation of sensory stimuli, threats and fear, debility, pain, heightened suggestibility and hypnosis, and the use of drugs. The manuals emphasize isolation, disorientation and the creation of "unpleasant or intolerable situations." Intergratees should be arrested early in the morning, blindfolded and stripped naked. They should be held incommunicado, deprived of food or sleep and normal routines, and subjected to "extremes of heat, cold and moisture." Interrogation rooms should be dark, soundproof and without windows and toilets.

According to *The Baltimore Sun*, the methods taught in the manuals and those used by the CIA-trained Honduran death squad, Battalion 316, in the early 1980s "show unmistakable similarities." Battalion 316 kidnapped, tortured and murdered hundreds of civilians. The newspaper presents the case of Ines Murillo, a Honduran woman who "was brutalized with shock torture" by this death squad. Murillo claims she was imprisoned in secret jails in 1983, denied food and water for days, and prevented from sleeping by having water poured on her head every ten minutes.

The manuals also refer to one or two weeks of "practical work" with prisoners, which suggests that U.S. trainers may have taken part in interrogations with Latin American militaries.

This supports claims by Latin American prisoners and U.S. nun Diana Ortiz, who was tortured by the Guatemalan army in 1989. Ortiz claims "U.S. personnel were present in interrogation and torture rooms." Sister Ortiz was kidnapped, taken to a secret prison and repeatedly raped and tortured by troops commanded by General Hector Gramajo, a CIA asset and graduate of the U.S. Army School of

the Americas. She stated that "the chief of her tormentors was a [U.S.] American who seemed to be linked to the U.S. embassy." The Guatemalan soldiers called him "Alejandro."

While in prison, Ortiz's back and chest were burned with cigarettes 111 times. She described being "lowered into an open pit packed ... with bodies of children, women and men, some decapitated, some lying face up and caked with blood, some dead, some alive and all swarming with rats." She was also forced to kill another prisoner and "Alejandro" threatened to blackmail her with evidence of this act.

A U.S. court held Guatemalan General Gramajo responsible for Sister Ortiz's rape and torture, and ordered him to pay \$47.5 million in damages. The General ignored the order and blamed Ortiz's burn marks on a sado-masochistic lesbian love affair. He was repeating a story first circulated by Lewis Anselem, the U.S. State Department's human rights chief at the U.S. embassy in Guatemala City.

Ortiz's ordeal was experienced by thousands of Guatemalans during the 1980s when the military, guided by the CIA in "practical work," carried out a massive program of political murder and torture. Allan Nairn reported in 1995 that the CIA "has systematic links to Guatemalan death squad operations." U.S. and Guatemalan officials informed Nairn that "CIA operatives work inside the Guatemalan army unit [the G-2] that maintains a network of torture centers and has killed thousands of Guatemalan civilians. At least three of the recent G-2 chiefs have been paid by the CIA."

*Asad Ismi is a Research Associate at the Centre for Social Justice. (KUBARK is a code-word referring to the CIA.)*



**First World Hunger:  
Food Security and Welfare Politics**  
edited by Graham Riches  
Garamond Press, 67 Mowat Ave,  
Suite 144, Toronto, ON M6K 3E3,  
1997, \$24.95.

reviewed by Garson Coon

To write a book on first world hunger during the end of the twentieth century would seem to be anachronistic. Perhaps such a book could have been written during the early part of the century, but not during a period when we have been told that the welfare state has been too generous and has therefore required drastic spending reductions because of supposed excessive social program expenditures.

Fortunately hunger does not exist in our country as it does for those poor souls from developing countries that with all too alarming frequency appear on our television screens. Acknowledging that there is a difference in meaning between hunger in developing countries and hunger in the first world, *First World Hunger* suggests a practical definition of hunger "as the inability to acquire or consume an adequate quality or sufficient quantity of food in a socially acceptable way, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so." With the above definition of hunger, it becomes possible to state that hunger does exist within first world countries.

*First World Hunger* is an edited book of comparative social policy analysis, containing contributions on the topic of domestic hunger from writers in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the U.K., and the U.S. Comparative policy analysis, especially in the areas of poverty and hunger, has always been difficult due to the lack of agreement on what constitutes an accurate measure of poverty or hunger. The study of hunger is also complicated by the fact

that hunger is not one-dimensional, but rather the absence of hunger is just once aspect of a complex of many different things that contribute to human well-being. Acknowledging the multidimensional aspects of hunger, this book presents material that contains both absolute and relative measures of hunger for each country. Such data is useful for making generalized comparisons among different countries.

Debates about poverty and hunger often get sidetracked into disagreements about the different measurements



indicating that poverty and hunger are merely partisan or at best technical discussions. This book discusses the recent depoliticization of hunger by the media, politicians and many social policy commentators and activists, and the beneficial consequences (for some) that ensue from the relegation of hunger to an individual or charity issue. A desire to once again return the presentation of hunger to a debate about issues of human rights and social and economic inequality is paramount to the book's authors.

As to the causes of first world hunger, the book cites events that are by now familiar through direct experi-

ence to many people. The book documents "prolonged high rates of unemployment and underemployment, growing inequality in terms of wealth distribution and the declining value of real wages and welfare benefits of the purchasing power of households" as causes of hunger. It also documents that in all five countries the source of these causes of first world hunger are found within the New Right economic agenda and "are directly related to massive economic restructuring generated by the forces of market globalization and the pursuit by nation-states of economic growth and increased international competitiveness through committing themselves to anti-inflation and deficit reduction policies, free trade and labour market deregulation and social spending cut-backs."

The book catalogues that those most likely to be experiencing hunger in the first world are women who are mothers or single parents, Aboriginal peoples, visible minorities and members of minority groups, unemployed single men, young people and a rising number among the elderly. Missing from the groups experiencing increases in hunger are the politicians, business leaders and the wealthy who with little surprise most directly advocate and benefit from the current economic agenda.

Certainly, the rise of hunger in the first world is a direct condemnation of our current economic agenda. This book makes an important contribution in documenting and explaining the failure of the New Right economic agenda for working people living with economic insecurity, people on fixed incomes, recipients of social spending, the poor and the hungry.

*Garson Coon has a doctorate in social work from Wilfrid Laurier University, and is a sessional lecturer at the University of Regina.*



**The Cult of Impotence:  
Selling the Myth of Powerlessness  
in the Global Economy**  
by Linda McQuaig  
Viking, 1998, \$32.00.

reviewed by Guy Marsden

No one has been able to get under the skin of today's neo-cons quite like author Linda McQuaig. The former *Globe and Mail* journalist has taken aim at Canada's establishment through her lucid critiques of the inequitable tax system, free trade, social program cut-backs and deficit-phobia. As a result, she has incurred the wrath of Conrad Black and Andrew Coyne, much to her credit.

Her fifth book, *The Cult of Impotence: Selling the Myth of Powerlessness in the Global Economy*, focuses on globalization, although it repeats the critiques of monetarist high interest policies found in her previous book, *Shooting the Hippo*.

Over \$1.2 trillion dollars are exchanged on world currency markets every day, of which only a small fraction is for trade or long-term investment.

McQuaig advances the idea of the Tobin tax, named after Nobel Prize winning economist James Tobin, as a method of combating the destabilizing effects of this currency speculation which restricts the ability of national governments to pursue low-interest policies and has recently contributed to the collapse of several South East Asian economies.

Essentially, the Tobin tax would impose a small levy whenever money was exchanged from one currency to another.

As McQuaig explains, the tax would discourage short-term investments in search of the highest rate of return, while leaving long-term foreign investments and one-time purchases of foreign goods largely unaffected.

For example, a Tobin tax of 0.2

percent would result in a \$200 charge if \$100,000 was exchanged into another currency, an amount not likely to discourage any investment. However, if the money was only parked for a short while to make a quick profit, the tax would become more of a deterrent. If the same \$100,000 makes a round trip every month, the yearly cost of the tax will be \$4,800. For a round trip every day, the yearly cost will be more than \$100,000.

The Tobin tax would also collect hundreds of billions of dollars, but the main purpose would be restoring the ability of national governments to pursue independent monetary policies to achieve full employment.

Another capital control that McQuaig points to is a Chilean law that requires foreign investors to keep their investments in the country for a minimum period of one year. Chile's central bank enforces this law by requiring reserve deposits for the investment, which are forfeited if the investment is removed before the year expires.

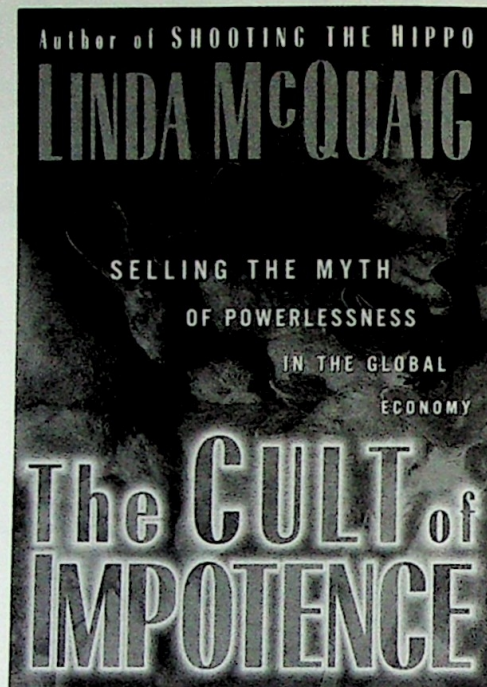
The law effectively shielded the Chilean economy from the Mexican peso crisis of 1994 which had a devastating impact on several Latin American countries.

The Chilean law also has the benefit of not requiring cooperation with other countries, which is one of the main obstacles facing the Tobin tax.

Still, the main argument advanced against capital controls is that governments no longer have the technical means of regulating capital flows when computers can move funds instantly around the world in a flick of a switch.

But as McQuaig points out, new computer technology is a "two-way street."

"The same technology that allows capital to be moved so quickly also allows for this movement to be traced," she argues, pointing to the increased use of computer records of citizens,



corporations, and surveillance of organized crime.

Banks have electronic records of all currency transactions, which are ultimately available to central banks. Thus, the means exist to have central banks force financial institutions to collect a Tobin tax.

"The real obstacle is political," McQuaig concludes.

"Governments have backed off from taking action to fight unemployment and provide well-funded social programs not because they lack the means but because they've chosen to render themselves impotent, powerless in the face of capital markets. The technological imperative turns out to be mostly a failure of will on the part of governments."

*The Cult of Impotence* is a long overdue contribution to the debate on globalization. Hopefully, it will challenge both those on the right and left of the political spectrum to rethink the notion that the global economy and capital mobility are inevitable.

Guy Marsden is a regular contributor to Briarpatch.



## WHOSE RULES?

"We are the greatest country in the world ... and what we are doing is serving the role of the indispensable nation to see what we can do to make the world safer for our children and grandchildren and for those people around the world who follow the rules."

- Madeleine Albright,

U.S. Secretary of State, February 18, 1998. On April 26, Henry Kissinger presented Albright with the "Seeds of Peace Award" at a \$750-a-plate dinner in New York. Albright once told Leslie Stahl of CBS that the starving to death of 600,000 Iraqis under the U.S.-led trade embargo was "a price we think worth paying."

# Say WHAT?

## BIG GULP

"They're a good source of water. Kids need lots of water."

- Dr. Richard Adamson,

vice-president of scientific and technical affairs for the National Soft Drink Association. The above quote is his reply to the question, "Is there any health value to caffeinated soft drinks?"

## MARS NEEDS A FEW GOOD MEN

"If my constituents wanted me to sit as an independent from Mars, I would do it."

- Ian McClelland,

Reform MP for Edmonton Southwest and deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, April 16, 1998. McClelland said he will sit as a representative of a united right-wing coalition in the House of Commons should a potential alliance of Reform and Tory members in his home riding come to fruition.



2 + 2 = ?

"Had I not been immersed in the work I was doing, I probably would have put this two and two together.... If I'd been a professor or unemployed, I would have looked at this."

- Madeleine Albright,

responding to New York Times columnist Frank Rich why she didn't connect the deaths of her Jewish grandparents during World War II with the Holocaust.

## COOKIE MONSTER

"My message to the women's groups is, if the Girl Guides can make it by selling cookies, so can they."

- Roy Bailey,

Reform MP for Souris-Moose Mountain, February 6, 1998. Bailey believes "special interest groups" such as women's organizations should not get government funding.







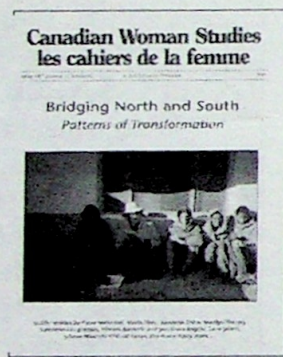
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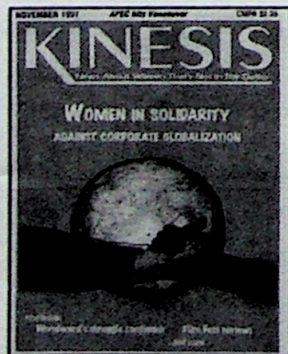
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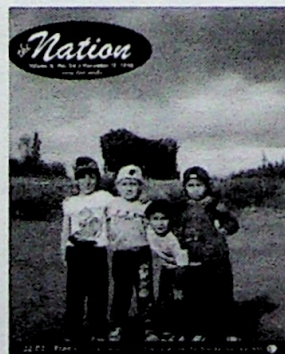
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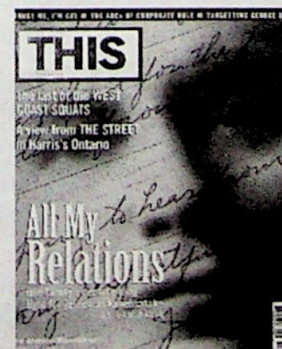
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# Nuclear Crimes

*How Canadian corporations profit off an illegal and immoral technology.*

by Dan Parrott

The India-Pakistan nuclear weapons tests in May have focused public concern on the menace of nuclear war. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's willingness to join other countries in imposing economic sanctions is laudable. However, the mainstream media continues to mute the vicious and illegal nature of these weapons, and Canada's role in proliferating nuclear weapons technology around the world.

The nuclear age opened in August 1945 when the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The bombings were not only unjustified, but also totally illegal.

International treaties such as the Declaration of St. Petersburg (1868) and the Hague Convention (1907) had set limits on the destructiveness of weapons and the use of violence during war, especially against civilians.

As a result, the bombings became an issue at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (the Tokyo trials) conducted shortly after the war.

Justice Radhabinod Pal of India was the only judge from a Third World country, and the only judge with any background in international law. He asserted that the U.S. was under grave suspicion for a "crime against humanity," as the Tokyo Charter defined it as "inhumane acts against any civilian population."

In his dissenting judgment Pal concluded, "If any indiscriminate destruction of civilian life and property is still illegitimate in warfare, then, in the Pacific war, this decision to use the atom bomb is the only near approach

to the directives of the German Emperor during the First World War and of the Nazi leaders during the Second...."

Writing 12 years after the Tokyo trials, Justice Roling of the Netherlands commented, "From the Second World War above all two things are remembered: the German gas chambers and the American atomic bombings."

In 1961 the U.N. summed up the law on this issue by declaring "Any State using nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons is to be considered as violating the Charter of the United Nations, as acting contrary to the laws of humanity and as committing a crime against mankind and civilization."

Despite the illegalities, Canada began funding nuclear weapons research. In 1946, the federal government closed a deal with Imperial Chemical Industries of Great Britain, and the U.S.-based DuPont Corporation. The deal brought Canadian personnel and equipment together at Chalk River to build nuclear reactors.

Canada's first reactors, the NRX and the NRU were plutonium producers. Their plutonium went directly to the United States and into its nuclear weapons arsenal.

The fact that U.S. nuclear weapons and weapons testing were the moral and legal equivalent of Nazi gas chambers did not seem to bother most Canadian scientists and politicians. Nor did it bother the corporations profiting off the publicly subsidized contracts. Their stance was identical to Volkswagen, BMW, Ford, Bata Shoes, and Knorr Foods that had profited off

concentration camp slave labour.

The public, however, was concerned. They began to pressure their Members of Parliament to find out what was going on at Chalk River.

To protect their fat contracts, corporations began to develop a disinformation campaign based on the fact that the waste heat from reactors producing plutonium for weapons could be used to generate electricity.

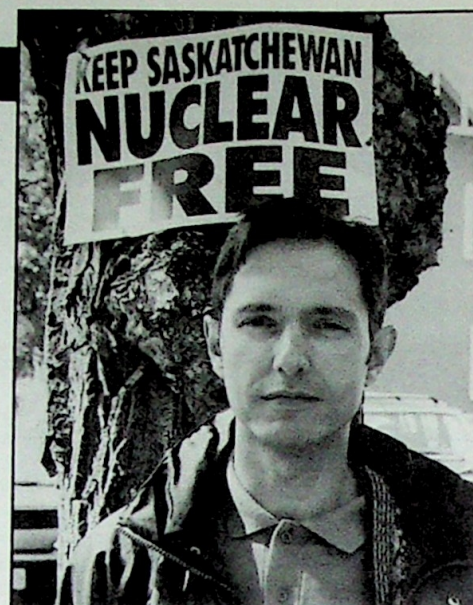
By using what environmentalists today call co-generation, corporations could tell the public that they were peaceful electricity producers, while remaining completely integrated in the weapons complex.

It is therefore no accident that the nuclear industry's foreign customers have been primarily military-oriented states with long lists of human rights abuses. These include Argentina, South Korea, Romania and lately China. And of course Canada put both India and Pakistan on the path to nuclear weapons.

In the final analysis we have criminals selling war crimes technology to other criminals.

It is time for the public to express its outrage over having to subsidize an industry whose end product, plutonium, ends up either in criminal weapons or as nuclear waste.

*Dan Parrott is a Regina researcher and writer.*







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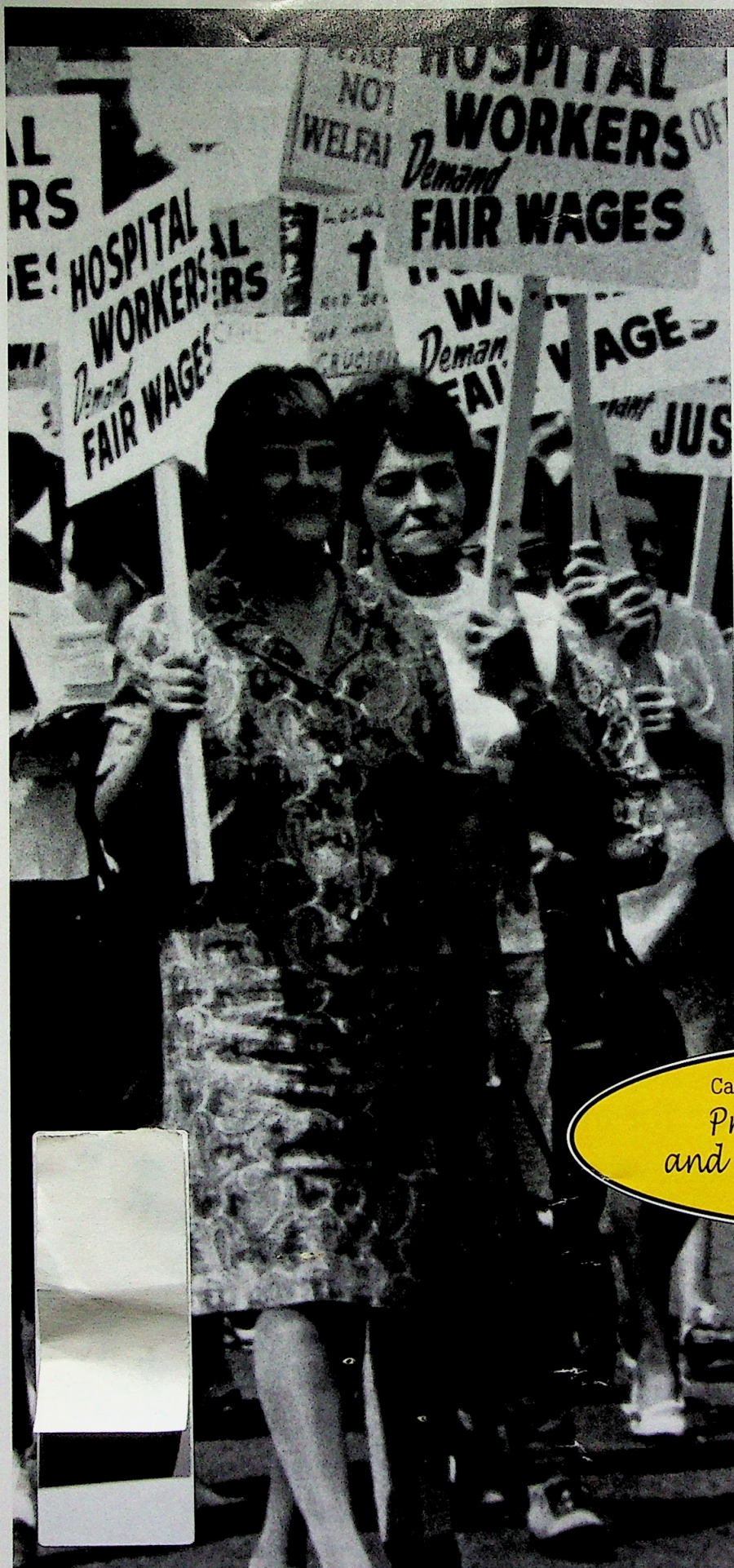
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